

Remarks

The Official Action dated December 7, 2005 has been carefully considered. Consideration of the amendments and the following remarks, and reconsideration of the rejections, are requested.

Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14-16 and 20 remain in the present application. Claims 7 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 11 and 20 have been amended for clarification. No new matter has been added, and support for all of these amendments is provided in the specification (e.g., pg. 7), drawings (e.g., FIGS 1-3) and claims as originally filed. Moreover, the language amended is similar to language in previous dependent claims and so no new search or substantial consideration is required. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in allowable form and place the claims in better form for consideration on appeal. Therefore, entry of these amendments is believed to be in order under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 and is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has maintained his rejection of claims 1-16 and issued a rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) under the argument that they are anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,891,237 to Allen. As the Examiner is aware, in order to anticipate a claim, a reference must teach each and every element of the claim. MPEP § 2131. Allen discloses a trailer hitch having an elongated shank 10 with a keeper notch 42 for coupling with a spring urged pawl 74. (See FIG. 2). The hitch may be uncoupled by "manually applying a depressing force to an upstanding button or projection 90 formed on the rearward end portion of the pawl 74." (Column 4, lines 18-21). The Examiner has now indicated that rearward end of pawl 74 is considered to be the release mechanism and projection 90 is considered to be the step cited in claims 1, 11 and 20 of the Application.

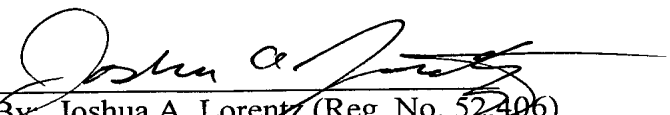
However, as discussed herein, independent claims 1, 11 and 20 include features not disclosed by Allen, in contrast to the Examiner's Statement. For example, Allen does not

disclose a jaw assembly that comprises a receptor (e.g., a cutout, surface on the underside of jaw assembly, etc.), nor does it disclose a release mechanism or step has an arm associated with said receptor configured to engage said receptor and apply upward force to said jaw assembly. In particular, the pawl 74 of Allen does not have a receptor associated with an arm. Moreover, it is noted that in Allen, the projection 90 located at the rearward end of pawl 74 is not an arm and it is not associated with any receptor of the pawl, nor is it configured to engage any receptor. In addition, it is further noted that the projection 90 does not apply upward force to pawl 74 as recited in claims 1, 11 and 20.

It is believed that the above represents a complete response to the Examiner's rejections, and that the present application is in condition for allowance. In particular, the independent claims are patentably distinct for at least the reasons discussed above, and the dependant claims are likewise distinct for at least these reasons. Reconsideration and early allowance are requested. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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